



**Association of Bay Area Governments  
Bay Area Air Quality Management District  
Metropolitan Transportation Commission**

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## **Joint Policy Committee / Regional Planning Program**

Date: September 14, 2005

To: Joint Policy Committee

From: Regional Planning Program Director

Subject: A Consolidated Work Program for Implementing and Refining the Bay Area's Smart-Growth Vision

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At its meeting of January 28, 2005, the Joint Policy Committee (JPC) directed that the Executive Director of the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), the Executive Director of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Executive Officer of the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) organize inter-agency resources to pursue integrative regional planning. The attached consolidated work program results from that direction. It sets forth a common rationale and a shared set of general tasks for pursuing and sharpening the regional Vision over the next few years.

This program is intended, in part, to respond to the functional consolidation requirements of SB 849 (Torlakson, 2004), as it describes a set of planning activities to be undertaken together by the regional planning agencies. Additional opportunities for administrative and technical cooperation will be described in an October memo to the JPC. The approved consolidated planning program and the cooperation opportunities will be combined in a report required FOR the Legislature by January 2006. That report must be considered by the JPC as well as by the ABAG Executive Board and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission before delivery to Sacramento.

The work program builds upon the regional Vision and on the implementation which has occurred to date (for example, Projections 2003/2005, the Transportation/Land-use Platform TLC/HIP and the Resolution 3434 TOD policy). It recognizes that a great deal of work still needs to be done to achieve the compact, transit-oriented region called for in the Vision.

The regional agency Executives have agreed to recommend *housing* as the strategic focus over the next several years. This responds to a growing public and political imperative to effectively address the region's housing affordability crisis. It also recognizes that the location and density of housing has a profound impact on other factors of importance to the region's future: housing development is the paramount consumer of unprotected open space, it competes with other desired uses (for example, industrial and goods-distribution facilities) for prime urban infill sites; and we have determined that locating housing and hence population closer to existing points of transit access will have a greater positive effect on transit trips and vehicle miles traveled than new investment in transportation infrastructure. Further, the region has a statutory obligation to complete a Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) over the next couple of years. This

contentious task is most positively approached by tying it closely to the Bay Area's common aspirations for itself as expressed in its Vision.

The consolidated planning program acknowledges that cities and counties have the primary responsibility for land-use planning and will principally determine where and at what densities housing development occurs. The regional Vision—which calls for compact, infill development in existing communities—can only be effectively implemented through local government decisions. Therefore, the understanding and buy-in of cities and counties, and the support of their citizens, are critical to making our growth strategy work. For that reason, ABAG and MTC are applying to the State for a Regional Blueprint Grant to fund that portion of the program aimed at increasing comprehension and commitment to the Vision among the region's local governments and among their local communities.

The one-million-dollar Blueprint-funded work will proceed through two interrelated efforts:

1. *Engagement of local governments and community stakeholders:* to remind local governments and local community stakeholders of the Bay Area's Smart-Growth Vision and the reasons underlying that Vision; to clarify the application of the Vision and principles to the region as a whole and to its specific constituent communities; to illustrate the implications of Vision-driven housing development on local neighborhood character. The outreach will employ geographic information system (GIS) map layers to graphically demonstrate the spatial interplay of smart-growth ideas and principles and will use three-dimensional imaging technology to show how density scenarios will appear in familiar contexts. Prototypical impacts on local transportation infrastructure and other common concerns will be modeled.
2. *Negotiation of specific priority areas for region-serving housing development:* to demonstrate and document local commitment to the regional Vision, to assist in the assignment of housing targets developed under a Vision-driven RHNA process, to provide the geographic basis for determining eligibility for future smart-growth incentives (e.g., local planning grants, transportation and infrastructure funds, open-space acquisition dollars, brownfield remediation assistance, housing subsidies) to be distributed by the State or region.

As the State has set a September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for the Blueprint Program application, our funding proposal has already been considered by the MTC Planning and Operations Committee and by the ABAG Executive Board.

## RECOMMENDATION

With the concurrence of the Executive Director of ABAG, the Executive Officer of BAAQMD, and the Executive Director of MTC, I RECOMMEND:

- A. THAT the JPC approve the attached *Consolidated Work Program for Implementing and Refining the Bay Area's Smart-Growth Vision* as a general guide for interagency regional planning activities and that it commend it to its member agencies for that purpose;

- B. THAT the JPC direct that the *Consolidated Work Program* be incorporated in a report on functional consolidation to be considered by the JPC, the MTC, and the ABAG Executive Board before submittal to the State Legislature in January, 2006;
- C. THAT the JPC endorse the work approach embodied in our application to the State for Regional Blueprint Program funding as a first step in pursuing the *Consolidated Work Program*.